

REMARKS

In the Office Action of December 10, 2007, the Examiner objected to the drawings as item 56 in FIG. 6 and item 64 and 66 in FIG. 12 were not described in the specification. With this Amendment, amendments to the specification are made to add reference numbers 56 and 66 to the specification. Reference numeral 64 is already in the specification, immediately proceeding the newly added number 66. The Examiner also objected to the specification and claim 1 and these objections have been corrected.

The Examiner objected to claim 9 and rejected claims 5 and 7. From these rejections, it is apparent that the Examiner did not consider the claims submitted with the Preliminary Amendment filed concurrently with the application. Claim 1, submitted with the Preliminary Amendment, recites that the central web has cylindrical portions at its end affixing the coupling element by screws. This limitation was not considered by the Examiner and is not disclosed in the prior art. Couto discloses the use of pegs at the end of the stringers. This is in contrast to coupling elements secured to the end of the stringers by screws engaging cylindrical portions. In addition, new claims have been added to further define the invention. It is respectfully requested that the claims submitted with the Preliminary Amendment be considered as these claims have not received an Action on the merits.

Newly submitted claims 10 and 11 recite that the edges of the coupling element have a curved and straight portion. The function of these portions is discussed in the specification on page 4, lines 6-16.

If any fees are due and owing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account 08-2455.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher J. McDonald", written over a horizontal line.

Christopher J. McDonald
Reg. No. 41,533
HOFFMAN, WASSON & GITLER, P.C.
2461 South Clark Street - Suite 522
Arlington, VA 22202
(703) 415-0100

February 4, 2008

Attorney Docket No: A-9789.AMA/cjm/cat